

# **WSDOT/WSTC Summary of Transportation Benchmarks Implementation**

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## **Introduction**

This document demonstrates how the Washington State Transportation Commission and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) have responded to the benchmarking legislation enacted in 2002 in ESHB 2304 and codified in RCW 47.01.012.

## **Benchmark Development**

WSDOT and the Transportation Commission not only implemented the benchmark requirements, but also attempted to evaluate the effectiveness and adequacy of the proposed benchmarks as results emerged. The process revealed that some of the proposed benchmarks needed to be refined and further developed to use available data and information or to meaningfully reflect the performance of the particular policy area. In some cases, comparative national data was of poor quality or lacking entirely. This led to some adaptation of the proposed benchmarks, as well as suggestions for new measures.

Experts generally agree that performance measure development is an iterative process. The benchmarks discussed in this report should be expected to be refined as time passes. Some information is part of a baseline, to which performance in future years can be compared. This is especially true with respect to congestion measures. WSDOT has responded to some of the weaknesses of some of the nationally used congestion measures by developing innovative new direction that is widely-recognized as contributing to improved national measurement approaches.

## **RCW 47.01.012 (ESHB 2304, Part I) Background**

Efforts to develop benchmarks for tracking and improving Washington's transportation system have been underway for several years.

In November 2000, the Governor-appointed Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's (BRCT) Benchmark Committee published its final report for Washington State. The report recommended eleven benchmarks for Washington's transportation system and a set of topics for additional benchmarks for future development.

The Washington State Transportation Commission conducted a workshop in January 2001 to analyze the potential application of the BRCT benchmarks. The Commission agreed to pursue the development of a performance measurement program tailored to WSDOT's needs and programs. The appointment of Doug MacDonald as the new Secretary of Transportation in April 2001 reinforced this direction.

In October 2001, the Transportation Commission formed a Benchmark Committee to develop and guide the use of benchmarks for WSDOT, working with the new Secretary and WSDOT staff. The committee proceeded to develop and implement benchmarks and performance measures for the major policy categories recommended by the BRCT.

In January 2002, the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2304. Part I of the act, "Establishment of Transportation Performance Measures," directs the Transportation Commission to develop benchmarks based on policy goals for the operation, performance of, and investment in the state's transportation system. These

policy goals consist of, but are not limited to, the benchmark categories adopted by the BRCT and complemented the work the Transportation Commission had begun in 2001.

The provisions of ESHB 2304 took effect on July 1, 2002 and are codified in Revised Code of Washington 47.01.012. There is no express deadline set for the completion of the indicated tasks.

The Transportation Commission's Benchmark Committee has addressed each of the Legislature's policy goals. The Benchmark Committee held its final meeting on January 17, 2003.

### **RCW 47.01.012 Policy Goals**

According to RCW 47.01.012, the following policy goals are the basis for establishing detailed and measurable performance benchmarks:

- Improving **safety**;
- No **interstate highways, state routes, and local arterials** shall be in poor condition;
- No **bridges** shall be structurally deficient, and safety retrofits shall be performed on those state bridges at the highest seismic risk levels;
- Traffic **congestion** on urban state highways shall be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean;
- **Delay** per driver shall be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean;
- Per capita **vehicle miles traveled** shall be maintained at 2000 levels;
- The **non-auto share of commuter trips** shall be increased in urban areas;
- **Administrative costs** as a percentage of transportation spending shall achieve the most efficient quartile nationally; and
- The state's public **transit** agencies shall achieve the median cost per vehicle revenue hour of peer transit agencies, adjusting for the regional cost of living.

### **Publication**

All measures have been published in WSDOT's quarterly performance report *Measures, Markers, and Mileposts* (also called *The Gray Notebook*). A subject index and all editions are available online at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability).

## Implementation Summary

Policy Goal	Implemented	Current Results
Safety	✓	<p>Safety improvement program delivery rate during the 01-03 biennium: 75.9% of plan.</p> <p>Fatal and disabling crashes on Washington State Highways declined 46.5% from 1990 to 2001.</p>
Pavement Condition	✓	<p>Interstate and state highway pavement condition: 9% poor in 2001.</p> <p>292 "due" lane miles of pavement were not rehabilitated in the 01-03 biennium due to funding constraints.</p> <p>Local arterial condition will be reported by cities and towns beginning in the 03-05 biennium.</p>
Bridge Condition	✓	<p>Bridge deck protection project delivery during the 01-03 biennium: 86.7% of plan.</p> <p>Steel bridge painting project delivery during the 01-03 biennium: 104.3% of plan.</p> <p>Bridge seismic retrofit program delivery during the 01-03 biennium: 109.1% of plan.</p>
Traffic Congestion	✓	<p>Number of over 90-minute incidents in the first quarter of calendar year 2003: 63 per month (average).</p> <p>Travel time comparison for 2001 and 2002 on 11 commute routes in the Puget Sound published. Goals are not yet established, but this information will be the basis for a travel time benchmark.</p>
Driver Delay	✓	<p>Improved measures under development to utilize better data collected from in-pavement loop detectors. See traffic congestion results.</p>
Per Capita VMT	✓	<p>Washington's Vehicle Miles Traveled per capita was 9,066 in 2002, below the target of 9,133 in 2000.</p>
Non-Auto Share of Commuter Trips	✓	<p>The state's commuting drive-alone rate declined slightly to 73.3% in 2000, compared to 73.9% in 1990. Washington was one of only two states to see a decline.</p>
Administrative Costs	✓	<p>Washington's administrative cost ranked 21<sup>st</sup> lowest (middle of second quartile) in 2001 among all 50 states.</p> <p>WSDOT calculated its administrative cost at 3.8% in 2002.</p>
Transit Cost Efficiency	✓	<p>Excerpts for 2001 below. Additional measures also developed.</p> <p>Average operating cost per total hour, urban fixed route: \$86.21</p> <p>Average operating cost per total hour, small urban fixed route: \$75.77</p> <p>Average operating cost per total hour; rural fixed route: \$56.28</p> <p>Average operating cost per total hour, demand response: \$50.34</p>